the UNITED STATES NAVY *presents . . .*

OPERATION PALETTE

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OPERATION PALETTE

foreword

While the United States was engaged in building up its huge military-industrial defense organization during the dark, uncertain months of 1941, a small group of naval officers and interested civilians began to make plans to bring into being an official Navy collection of historical art. An office to carry out these plans was established within the Navy Department.

Following the outbreak of war at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the Navy commissioned a small number of high ranking professional artists to form the nucleus of what is now the Combat Art Section of the Office of Information. The late Griffith Bailey Coale of New York, a muralist and landscape painter of wide reputation, was first to report on board. He is largely credited with organizing the combat artists' corps in the Navy.

As war spread further and the months wore on into mid-1942, artists Albert K. Murray, William F. Draper, Mitchell Jamieson, and others reported for duty and were assigned to various theatres of combat to compile a broad pictorial history of Navy and Marine Corps action.

The tide of war, first running against the Allied nations, changed. The far-flung defensive action called the Battle of the Atlantic issued slowly into a huge Allied offensive. Japan was checked, then pushed back, in her attempt to subjugate the islands of the Pacific. By then there were Navy artists in all parts of the world, faithfully putting down with brush, pen, and crayon the catastrophic experiences and the raw feelings of the seamen, Marines, and airmen who stormed tropic beaches and fought in the skies and on the oceans to perpetuate the democratic ideal of human freedom.

The paintings they sent back to the Navy Department were of far greater significance than mere factual pictorial reporting. They were unique pictures of world history, and many were major works of art. As much as creative skill, they often illustrate the courage and determination of the artists themselves, for many were originated under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions.

During post-World War II years, these paintings were gathered together to form the present Navy combat art collection, of which *Operation Palette* is a part. Paintings have been exhibited on hundreds of occasions in galleries and public buildings throughout the United States, and the traveling exhibition, which is *Operation Palette*, also has traversed the nation almost continually since its initial tour in 1946.

The traveling exhibition returns annually to the home of the collection in

Washington, D. C., where new works are incorporated into it to keep it current.

Since the Korean War, the paintings of two new artists who were assigned to action zones in Korea have been included in the Navy collection. The still later works of another combat artist, Richard A. Genders, assigned to the Atlantic and Mediterranean areas to cover fleet operations and maneuvers with the navies of NATO countries, have been added, as has a series of this same artist's paintings of U. S. Seventh Fleet operations in the China Seas.

In 1955-56 one of the early combat artists, Standish Backus, Jr., left professional work for Navy duty and embarked for the Antarctic with a Navy polar expedition. His "Operation Deep Freeze" paintings, a rare group of works, have been added to the official collection.

It will be noted that the Navy's combat artists have held a number of different officer ranks and enlisted ratings. Certain of the artists entered naval service as artists. Some others were discovered already in the Navy but engaged in other duties, the designation of which they carried throughout their military careers. However, all of the group represented in the collection were accorded the title of Official Navy Combat Artist.

Operation Palette contains one hundred and more carefully selected paintings representing some of the best work of the Navy's combat art group. This exhibition is supervised by the Combat Art Section of the Navy Department Office of Information, Washington 25, D. C.

Eventually these paintings, and hundreds of other works in a variety of media, are destined to become a part of a proposed National War Museum collection of historic American Art in Washington.

Standish Backus, Jr.

Commander, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

A graduate of Princeton University with a degree in Art and Architecture, Commander Backus later studied painting and art in Europe. When he reported for active duty with the Navy early in 1941,

he became a specialist in Net and Boom Defenses; in May 1945 he was assigned to cover naval operations in the Pacific. Arriving in Japan with the Fourth Marine Regiment, he participated in the entry into Toyko Bay and witnessed the surrender ceremonies aboard USS *Missouri* on September 2, 1945. In 1955-56 he returned to duty at his own request to go with Admiral Byrd to the Antarctic. In civil life he is engaged in illustrating, painting, and teaching at his home in Santa Barbara, California.

Hugh Cabot

Journalist-Seaman, USN
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

After graduating from the New Hampton Preparatory School and attending the George Vesper Art School in Boston, Massachusetts, Journalist-Seaman Cabot later became staff member of the Boston

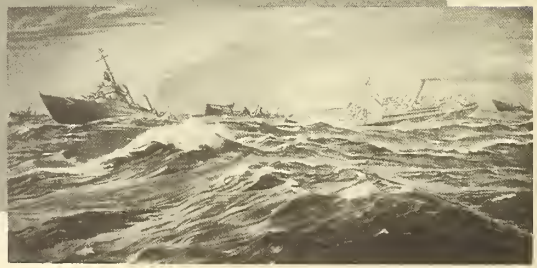
Museum of Science. His naval career began shortly after the start of the Korean War. Completing his recruit training, he was assigned to USS *Princeton*, where he recorded action of Carrier Task Force 77. He frequently flew with pilots on their missions to achieve the first hand knowledge which makes his paintings realistic. After accompanying the First Marine Division through the bitter winter above the 38th Parallel, he returned to Tokyo to finish his sketches made in Korea. He resumed life as a civilian in 1954.

Griffith Bailey Coale

Commander, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Commander Coale spent three years studying art in Munich, Paris, Italy, and Spain. Subsequent to his return to the United

States and residence in New York City, he became nationally known through his many famous murals and paintings. In August 1941 he was commissioned in the U. S. Naval Reserve with the rank of Lieutenant Commander and became the Navy's first combat artist on active duty. He was then assigned to the far-flung theaters of the war. Life magazine reproduced his "North Atlantic Patrol" series, later published in book form. He died unexpectedly in 1950.



William F. Draper

Lieutenant Commander, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

Born in Hopedale, Massachusetts, Lieutenant Commander Draper attended the National Academy of Design and the Cope Art School in Massachusetts, and

also studied in France and Spain. Commissioned early in 1942, he did a series of paintings during his coverage of the Aleutians, Bougainville, and the Marianas campaigns which later appeared in color reproductions in the National Geographic Magazine. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his meritorious work as a combat artist while painting in the Aleutians and under enemy attack in the South Pacific. He is now a member of Portraits, Incorporated, of New York, where he is actively engaged in portrait painting.

OPERATION PALETTE

Bound overseas by Navy ship

On location in a Midwestern city

A mobilized art exhibition

At the Metropolitan Museum, New York City

The exhibition custodian in a TV talk

At the National Gallery, Washington

Operation Palette has toured the United States almost without interruption since 1946, and occasionally has been sent abroad for exhibitions. It has been presented before audiences in villages, towns and cities in the four corners of the forty-eight states, and in the greatest metropolitan galleries. Many millions of people have been afforded an opportunity to view this unique collection, the only such group of historical war paintings in existence.

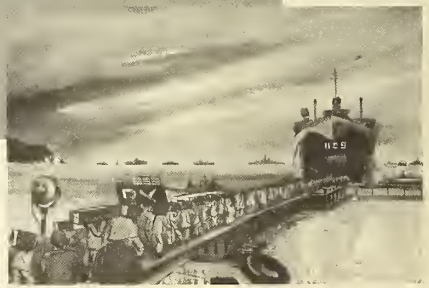
Operation Palette appears on local exhibition under the sponsorship of friends of the Navy who have an appreciation for this unusual means of presenting authentic Twentieth Century American history to the public. Without the unselfish assistance of these sponsors, this traveling exhibition could not be maintained on tour.

Richard A. Genders

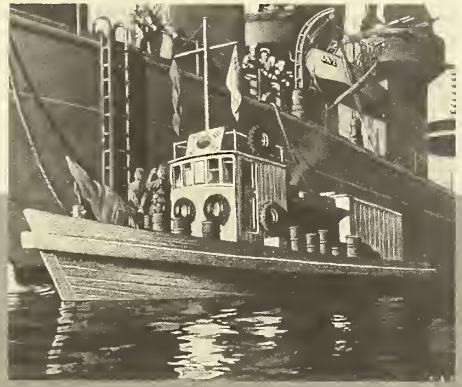
Chief Draftsman-Illustrator, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

A graduate of the John Herron Art Institute of Indianapolis, Chief Genders is a native of London. A veteran of World War II, he served in the North African area and in the South Pacific. Prior to

his return to active duty and assignment as a combat artist, he conducted a studio school and was actively engaged in landscape painting and exhibiting in national art shows. He has introduced a gouache technique in his series of U. S. Sixth Fleet paintings. His paintings of NATO exercises and maneuvers dramatically portray the role of the high-speed carrier and its jet planes in modern warfare. He returned to civil life in 1955 after executing a series on the Seventh Fleet in the Far East.



Herbert C. Hahn



Photographer First Class, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

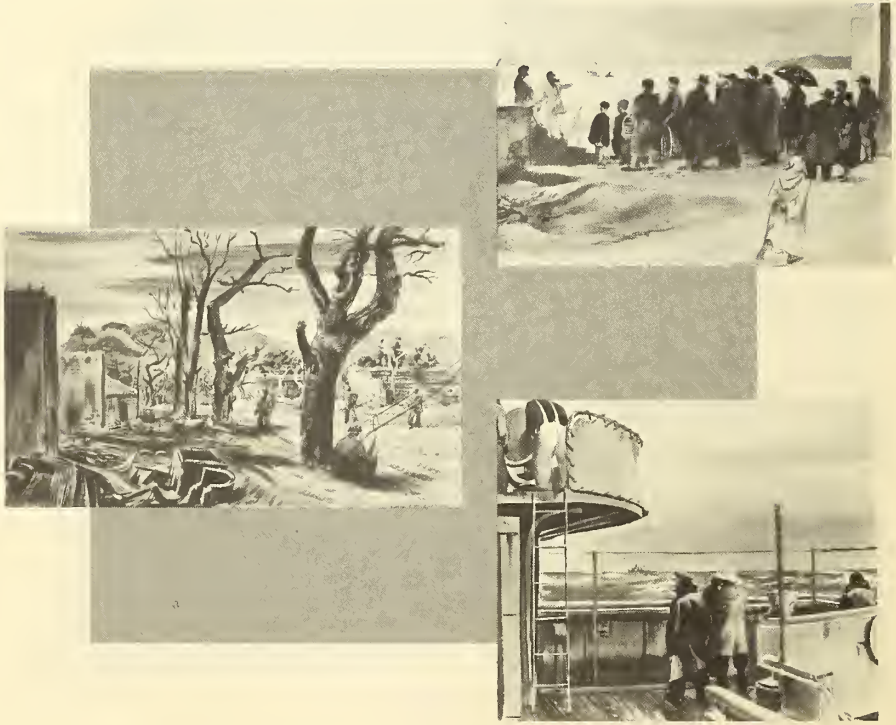
A native of Massachusetts, Photographer First Class Hahn acquired his art training in Boston. An Army veteran of World War II, he enlisted in the Naval Reserve

and was called to active duty in 1950. He was assigned to the carrier USS *Boxer* until his spare time painting became recognized and he was subsequently assigned as an official combat artist. During his tour of duty with the Commander, Naval Forces, Far East, he executed over 100 paintings showing the Navy ashore and afloat. He received the Navy Commendation for his work and is now in Culver City, California, designing trade shows and exhibits on a national scale.

Mitchell Jamieson

Lieutenant, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

One of the country's foremost watercolor artists, Lieutenant Jamieson was born in Kensington, Maryland, and attended the Abbott School of Fine and Commercial Arts and the Corcoran Art School in Washington, D. C. Having already established himself with many noted commissions, he began his duty in 1942 as an official combat artist depicting the Navy in its many operations from the North African campaign to the South Pacific. During the war he was awarded the Bronze Star medal. His combat paintings have been extensively reproduced by Life, Fortune, and other national publications. Twice awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship and the Award of Merit by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Mr. Jamieson is now painting in his studio near Washington, D. C.



Edward Millman

Lieutenant, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

A native of Chicago, Lieutenant Millman attended the Art Institute of Chicago and later became chief illustrator on the art staff of the Chicago Evening American.

His interest in the frescoes of Diego Rivera led him south to further his art education in Mexico. He has been awarded a post-service Guggenheim Fellowship for his paintings that have been exhibited in leading American museums and art galleries. Commissioned by the Navy in 1943, Lieutenant Millman saw duty as a combat artist in the South Pacific theater of operations.

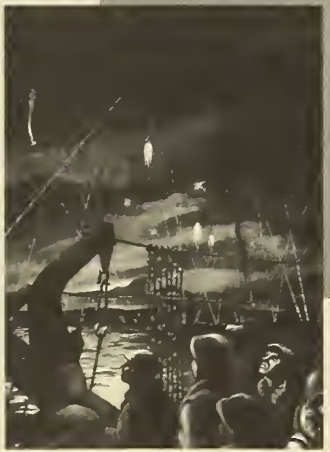
Albert K. Murray

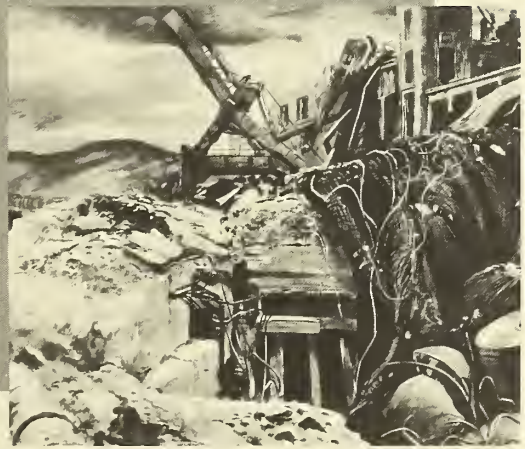
Commander, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

Upon graduating cum laude from the College of Fine Arts, Syracuse University, Commander Murray, a native of Emporia, Kansas, continued his studies both in the United States and Europe. Before he was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Naval

Reserve in March, 1942, he was already a well-known portrait painter. Assigned to the Combat Art Section, his first duty was to execute a series of portraits of the Navy's General Board, which were the first of his many now famous military portraits. Attached to the Fourth Fleet, South Atlantic, and then the Eighth Fleet, North African waters, he returned with a large collection of oils, many of which are in *Operation Palette*. Today Mr. Murray is one of the country's leading portrait painters. His home is in White Plains, New York.

Alexander P. Russo





Specialist First Class, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

A student of the Pratt Institute of New York and later a staff member of a popular magazine, Specialist First Class Russo is a native of Atlantic City, New Jersey.

His paintings have been widely exhibited in eastern cities of the United States. He enlisted in the Naval Reserve in October, 1942, and began doing layouts and illustrations for Navy publications. He later painted the manifold activities of the African and Sicilian operations and was assigned duty aboard a landing craft so that he might graphically capture the events of D-Day in the invasion of France. Mr. Russo was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for his combat art work.

Commander, USNR
Official U. S. Navy Combat Artist

Born in Everett, Massachusetts, a graduate of Williams College, he became a member of the American Artists' Group and the American Artists Professional League. Commissioned in May, 1942,

Commander Shepler first was assigned to a destroyer on Pacific convoy duty. From the mud of Guadalcanal, through the years of the material build-up in England, to the memorable D-Day on the French coast, he painted and recorded the Navy's warfare. His final work for the Navy was the execution of two large murals at the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. He is now active and widely recognized in art circles as a painter of many talents and great skill.

Dwight C. Shepler

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The medium of art is unlike all other means of description. The printed word is restricted in its power accurately to portray events, for the central fact of an event is dependent on secondary facts, often too elusive for proper description, such as light, color, juxtaposition. The camera is a faithful medium, but often unable to bring into desired focus all of the significant elements of a scene. The hand of a skilled artist can compose, color, shade, make prominent or subdue these elements as necessary to create a lasting, truthful visualization.

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